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ABSTRACT

A summary of the findings and recommendations of the Swedish Government's Committee on Linguistic Minorities among Children of Preschool Age is provided in this report. The first six chapters supply background material. Chapter 1 describes the target group and its estimated size, and suggests new definitions for use in native language backing schemes. In Chapter 2, social and cultural conditions affecting immigrant and minority children are described. Questions relating to language development and multilingualism are discussed in Chapter 3. Chapters 4-6 outline the past development of native language training at preschool level. Chapter 7 defines the proposed objectives of native language backing programs, both in and out of school. The remaining chapters deal with the following topics: (8) investigatory visits and related activities, language registration, and planning of native language programs by local authorities; (9) children not brought up as Swedish-speakers in hospitals or in children's or family homes, and handicapped children with immigrant or minority backgrounds; (10) planning and organizing native language backing in preschools; (11) methods of native language backing in preschools; (12) cooperation between preschool and primary school; (13) native language backing outside preschool in cultural and recreational spheres; (14) toys and working materials for native language backing in and out of preschool; (15) training of bilingual and Swedish staff; (16) proposed act on native language backing in preschools; and finally (17), estimated cost and suggested government subsidies. (KH)

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LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL BACKING

for Immigrant and Minority-Group Children of Pre-School Age

Summary

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Findings of the Committee on Linguistic Minorities among Children of Pre-School Age

Translation: Alan Imber

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COMMITTEE ON LINGUISTIC MINORITIES
AMONG CHILDREN OF PRE-SCHOOL AGE

SUMMARY

Introduction

Directives

On 15th March, 1979, the Government decided to appoint a Committee, to be made up of six members, with instructions to produce a survey of the linguistic situation of immigrant children of pre-school* age (0-7 years) and to suggest appropriate courses of action (Dir. 1979:30).

The task of the Committee, in compliance with the government directives, was therefore

a) to examine the scope and organization of current native language training programmes and the resources available in terms of staff;

b) to clarify immigrant children's right to training in their native language and to recommend any changes that might better fulfil their particular needs;

c) to consider the relationship between the linguistic status of children of pre-school age and the measures taken on their behalf after they start attending school; and

d) to look into ways of ensuring that bilingual staff will always be available.

On 13th March, 1980, the Government issued further directions to all committees then at work regarding the financing of reforms (Dir. 1980:20). All proposals and recommendations put forward by a committee were to be feasible within a framework of resources that would remain unchanged for the area envisaged by the proposals.

* Pre-schools are organized in day nurseries (age 6 months to 7 years) and part-time groups (5-7 years).

Constitution of the Committee

Members

Rigmor von Euler, chairman
Karin Andersson (Centre), until 30th November, 1979
Per-Olof Bengtsson (Communist)
Paul Grabö (Centre), from 1st December, 1979
Gunnel Liljegren (Conservative)
Margit Sandéhn (Social Democrat)
Karl-Erik Strömberg (Liberal)

Specialists

Gunilla Hardeberg (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs), from 1st November, 1980
Helena Pentinsaari (Swedish Immigration Board)
Siv Thorsell (National Board of Health and Welfare), from 1st November, 1980
Billy Thorstenson (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs), until 31st Oct., 1980
Jonas Widgren (Ministry of Labour)
Anne-Outram Wigart (Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs)
Ylva Winberg (Swedish Association of Local Authorities)
Inga-Britta Astedt (National Board of Health and Welfare)

Experts

Anna-Greta Heyman, from 15th June, 1981
Lars-Ake Lundquist, from 1st November, 1980
Elisabeth Krausz, from 1st November, 1979, until 31st October, 1980
Gunnel Olsson, from 1st January, 1982
Lydia Rättö-Nilsson

Secretaries

Lars-Ake Lundquist, from 15th November, 1979, until 31st October, 1980
Siv Thorsell, from 1st November, 1980

Assistant secretaries

Solveig Mannheimer, from 15th November, 1979, until 17th August, 1980
Gunnel Olsson, from 11th August, 1980, until 31st December, 1981

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

On 10th June, 1980, the Committee submitted a memorandum (Dnr F 1678/80) to the Government recommending that local authorities be legally required to provide native language backing for five and six-year-old immigrant children attending pre-school. Their recommendation was put forward in the form of an amendment to ss. 6 of the Child Care Act, which to all intents and purposes corresponds to ss. 15 of the current Social Services Act.

The Committee originally intended the Act to take effect on 1st January, 1981, and to remain in force until a more definitive course of action could be discussed and reviewed by the appropriate bodies, but although the proposal was submitted for comment and met with the general approval of those by whom it was examined, no further action was taken. However, a decision has yet to be made at governmental level, and the Committe hereby submits an amended proposal.

Three separate working parties were appointed by the Committee.

The Working Party on Native Language Backing in Child Care Amenities comprised Pirkko Leporanta-Morley, a pre-school teacher; Ankica Ristić, a native language teacher; Lydia Rättö-Nilsson, a methods teacher; Ylva Winberg, secretary; and Inga-Britta Astedt, head of section, National Board of Health and Welfare.

The Working Party on Native Language Backing outside Child Care Amenities comprised Marianne Bergström, a district nurse; Gunilla Hardeberg, head of division, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs; Lars-Åke Lundquist, head of section; Helena Pentinsaari, head of section, Swedish Immigration Board; Marianne Svanborg, senior child health officer; Anne-Outram Wigart, head of division, Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs; and Kerstin Wigzell, secretary.

The Working Group on Cultural Affairs comprised the author Mehmet Enim Bozarslan (from 17th October, 1980); Miklos Gulyas, librarian (until 28th November, 1980); Anna-Greta Heyman, secretary; Gerd Hillman, head

of section (from 29th November, 1980); Birgitta Johansson-Hedberg, head of the pre-school section of the educational radio programmes; Heli Vasara, librarian; and Kerstin Åsbrink, studies organizer.

On a number of occasions the Committee held discussions with national representatives of various immigrant and minority organizations and, in some districts, with purely local organizations.

As far as possible, it was the Committee's ambition to consider everything it learned and to take into account all the viewpoints that emerged at these meetings and during the discussions with the three working parties.

In October, 1981, the chairman and secretaries travelled to West Germany and Yugoslavia to study the linguistic and cultural assistance afforded by those countries to immigrant and minority groups.

During May, 1980, a survey of native language training at pre-school level was carried out in 31 districts, with two follow-up studies in 1981. One of the aims of the survey was to establish the costs that have to be met by local authorities in providing native language assistance for children in pre-school.

The Committee also joined forces with the Immigration Board in carrying out a survey in 16 districts to determine the number of gypsy children attending pre-school and the extent to which they are provided with native language backing.

In September, 1981, the Committee sent out a questionnaire to children's welfare centres in 22 districts with a high percentage of immigrants. The material thus obtained was then processed by the Central Board of Statistics and compiled in the form of a report under the title "Barnavårdscentralerna och språkliga minoritetsgrupper. Redovisning av en enkätundersökning" ("Children's Health Centres and Linguistic Minorities. Results of a Survey" – March, 1982).

The Committee also ordered a report on the results of research on language development and multilingualism in children. This was prepared by three researchers at the Linguistics Faculty of the University of Gothenburg, Jens Allwood, Monica MacDowall and Sven Strömquist, and is presented in a separate report.

At the request of the Committee a report was also prepared on the methods used by pre-schools in their work with immigrant and minority children and what these imply in concrete terms. Compiled by Lydia Rättö-Nilsson, one of the Committee's experts, this report is entitled "Flerspråkighet och flerkulturalism i förskolan – vill vi, kan vi ?" ("Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in Pre-Schools – What Do We Want ? Can We Cope ?").

In addition, a study was carried out at the request of the Committee by Anne Haga and Ingegerd Municio, both members of the Expert Group for Immigrant Research (EIFO),on the implementation of native language reforms at pre-school level.

With the submission of the present Report, the Committee considers its assignment to have been duly completed.

OUTLINE OF REPORT

The first six chapters of the report are intended to supply background material to those which follow. These are numbered 7 to 17 and contain the Committee's recommendations and proposals. The first chapter is devoted to a description of the target group and its estimated size, and suggests new definitions for use in native language backing schemes.

In chapter two the Committee attempts to describe the conditions under which immigrant and minority children grow up from a social and cultural perspective. Questions relating to language development and multilingualism are taken up in chapter three.

The three chapters which follow, 4-6, describe the development of native language training at pre-school level as it has hitherto taken place.

Chapter seven defines the proposed objectives of native language backing programmes, both in and out of pre-school.

The following topics are dealt with in the remaining chapters :

Chap. 8 : Investigatory visits and related activities, language registration and planning of native language programmes by local authorities.

Chap. 9 : Children not brought up as Swedish-speakers in hospital or in children's or family homes; handicapped children with an immigrant or minority background.

Chap. 10 : Planning and organizing native language backing in pre-schools.

Chap. 11 : Methods of native language backing at pre-school.

Chap. 12 : Cooperation between pre-school and primary school.

Chap. 13 : Native language backing outside pre-school in cultural and recreational spheres.

Chap. 14 : Toys and working materials for native language backing in and out of pre-school.

Chap. 15 : Training of bilingual and Swedish staff.

Chap. 16 : Proposed act on native language backing in pre-schools.

Chap. 17 : Estimated cost, suggested government subsidies.

Among the appendices to the report are the results of the questionnaire sent to the district authorities and a summary of a study made on the native language assistance provided in the districts of Borlänge and Nacka. The native language programmes available to immigrant and minority children in other countries are also reviewed in an appendix.

One of the members of the Committee, Gunnel Liljegren, entered a reservation against one of the Committee's recommendations in chaps. 16 and 17, remarking that if the local authorities were to include private open pre-schools among their planned child care amenities and receive government grants for so doing, the various immigrant associations would be able to make their own arrangements for providing native language backing for the children.

Ylva Winberg, a specialist member of the Committee, observed in a separate statement that the Swedish Association of Local Authorities did not consider the proposed legislation justifiable. She argues among other things that it is the local political basis of native language schemes rather than legislation and government control that can provide the best guarantee that the need of minority-group children for such backing will in fact be fulfilled.

Summary

The Swedish version of the summary was checked for linguistic accuracy by Peder Carlquist, a journalist. This, and translations into English and Finnish, are published separately and can be ordered from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (Socialdepartementet), S-103 33 Stockholm, Sweden.

CHILDREN IN NEED OF NATIVE LANGUAGE BACKING (CHAPTER 1)

Target groups and definitions

It is largely through language that a person builds up his own identity, his stock of knowledge and an ability to cope with the various situations of everyday life. Language is a means of interpreting life and the outside world and helps a child towards a better understanding of its surroundings. It is important that immigrant and minority-group children first become competent in their mother-tongue before going on to learn a second or third language.

The native language backing provided for children not brought up as native Swedish-speakers should be regarded as a complement to the child's normal upbringing in the home. It should be based on the language spoken with the child at home and on the culture represented in the home.

The Committee considers that the assistance provided should be for the language spoken by the child as his or her daily means of communication in the home.

Minority groups in Sweden

The Committee uses the term minority group, or linguistic minority, in the sense of a group of people whose language and cultural heritage differs from that of the majority population. The definition may apply either to immigrants – that is, persons who have immigrated to this country, and their children, whether born in their country of origin or in Sweden – or to native or indigenous minorities.

The Committee reckons that about one million persons of foreign extraction are at present living in Sweden.

This estimate includes 606,000 persons born abroad and 355,000 second-generation immigrants, i.e. persons born in Sweden to at least one foreign-born parent. Although there are no precise statistics on the languages these people speak, according to the Expert Group for Im-

migrant Research (EIFO) Sweden is today the home of children of pre-school age, with at least one foreign-born parent, originating from some 130 different countries. At the beginning of 1980 the number of children of pre-school age attributable to this category was over 105,000.

The largest linguistic minorities in Sweden speak the following languages : Finnish, Serbo-Croat, Greek, Lappish, Estonian, Spanish, Polish, Hungarian, Turkish and Italian. There are two indigenous minorities in Sweden – the Lapps, and the Finnish-speaking population living in the Tornedalen area in the North.

The Committee estimates the total number of children six years old or younger whose everyday language in the home is not Swedish to be at least 60,000.

A central consideration in the work of the Committee was the need for children and parents to share a language in common. The Committee did not, however, include children who although Swedish from an ethnical and linguistic point of view may yet need some form of language backing, e.g. children of normal speech and hearing whose parents are either deaf or have impaired hearing and who use sign language to communicate. It goes without saying that these children and their parents also need a language in common; but the Committee did not consider it to lie within the bounds of its assignment to propose means by which this group of children would be able to learn sign language.

However, the Committee does consider that there may be adopted children who in spite of living with Swedish families and having Swedish as their normal everyday language still have a distinct need of continued backing in their first language.

Views and proposals of the Committee

The Committee proposes that

> the definition of a native language be changed from "a language that is a living feature of a child's domestic environment" to the language spoken by the child as his or her daily means of communication in the home;

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the term "native language training" be replaced by "native language backing", defined as activities for children of pre-school age carried on in a minority language;

the term native language activities be used in a general sense to include the various activities aimed at providing linguistic and cultural backing for children of pre-school age in child care amenities and taking part in recreational and cultural arrangements;

the term native language group be used to denote pre-school groups in which all the children and the majority of the staff belong to the same linguistic minority (often referred to today as a "single language group");

the term composite group be used to denote groups in which some of the children and staff are members of a linguistic minority, the remainder being Swedish-speakers (often referred to today as a "bilingual group"); and that

the term Swedish-speaking group be used to denote groups in which the normal language of communication is Swedish. Children in these belonging to linguistic minorities should receive native language backing from native language teachers or the like who visit the children regularly for a few hours per week (sometimes referred to as "integrated groups").

Other terms

The Committee decided to refer either to "native language" (hemspråk) or "mother tongue" (modersmål) in their work, although the term "native language" was to be preferred in contexts requiring a precise administrative or legal definition. The Committee on Language and Cultural Heritage appointed in 1981 (Dir. 1981:49) has been assigned the task of suggesting an appropriate designation for the languages.

The following terms are used to denote members of pre-school staff, although these should by no means be construed as being the suggested official designations :

Bilingual staff is used to denote all members of the staff of a children's group with a command of a minority language and Swedish able to provide native language backing for the children.

Native language teacher is used to denote itinerant staff providing native language assistance in several pre-schools and groups of children. In pre-schools these are usually known as native language trainers.

Swedish staff is the term used, for practical purposes, to denote persons not employed as bilingual staff.

CHILDHOOD CONDITIONS – A MULTI-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE (CHAPTER 2)

Culture and child-raising

Culture is by no means a clear-cut concept. Many people think of it as something primarily artistic – the theatre, literature, painting, music, etc. – whereas in fact every aspect of our life and behaviour is an expression of some form of human culture. Every ethnic and linguistic group has a culture of its own, which differs from all others. For the present purposes the Committee based its work on the wider definition of the term.

Part of Sweden's immigrant policy is to give immigrants the chance of choosing for themselves just how far they wish to preserve and develop their own cultural and linguistic identity.

Child-raising is a factor of crucial importance in any culture, for it is through the children that a particular group's culture is transmitted to the next generation. The way immigrant and minority children are brought up therefore represents a potential source of conflict with other cultures and other views on the way children should be raised.

Both Swedish and immigrant children, in particular the latter, need support from their parents and other adults in confronting cultures other than their own.

Social adjustment

In social terms, immigrant children are often at a disadvantage as compared to Swedish children and young people. One of the things noted by the Committee was that many immigrant children live away from their parents for long periods of time – and research has yet to be done pointing to ways in which these children can be given the chance of a happy, well-adjusted upbringing.

Analysis of reports and statistical surveys reveals that second-generation immigrants are generally more liable than Swedes to become social misfits and lapse into criminality. Indeed, statistics show a tendency towards increased criminality among the younger age groups, and in districts with large immigrant populations children from immigrant families are over-represented in the cases referred to the child welfare authorities. The proportion of immigrant children and youths in children's homes and approved school is remarkably large, and in some groups the number of drug abusers is alarming. There appears to be a number of reasons for this. One explanation is probably that immigrant parents are often unable to manage a family crisis and do not know where to turn for help, with the result that quite drastic action may have to be taken unless something constructive is done in time to remedy the situation.

It is important that immigrant children feel they are part of Swedish society. A well-organized communications network between the family, child care amenities and school is therefore essential. Native language backing at pre-school level plus native language instruction at school are among the most important of the measures that can be taken by society to help immigrant children and young people develop.

Views and proposals of the Committee

The Committee considers that

> through schooling, the provision of information, and personal contacts with the groups involved, the majority population – in particular nursery school staff, teachers, friends of the children at nursery school and primary school, and their parents – should be encouraged to familiarize themselves with and learn from the languages and cultures of minority groups;

strong backing should be provided for the language and culture of immigrant families at pre-school and primary school levels, as well as in society at large;

children belonging to the same ethnic and linguistic group should be enabled to form their own pre-school group, with staff who speak their language and share their families' culture; and that

composite and Swedish-speaking groups should be so formed as to comprise staff from both or all groups represented by the children. In groups of this type it is essential that both children and staff are equal in all respects.

The Committee proposes that

the Government attempt to initiate cooperation with immigrant countries and international organizations with a view to bringing about research on the circumstances of children left behind in their native country or sent back there at the start of the school term. These children thus grow up seeing their parents only sporadically while at the same time they are exposed to different cultural influences. The development of children who return to their native country with their families after several years abroad should also be studied.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND MULTILINGUALISM (CHAPTER 3)

Three research workers at the University of Gothenburg were asked by the Committee to draw up a report on the results of research on language development and multilingualism in children. The Committee also considered the opinions of Professor Els Oksaar, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Ph.D., and Professor Gunnar Tingbjörn.

Views of the Committee

Children and their parents need a language in common. During the earliest years of a child's life it is the language (or languages) spoken within the family that is (are) of the greatest significance, but as the child

grows up an understanding of the culture and language of the rest of society, if other than that represented by the child's mother tongue, becomes more and more important.

Language is learned and developed within a social context. A child's family, relatives and friends, and communication and contact with other people, are all important in incorporating it into a particular linguistic and cultural group. Assistance in assuming a linguistic and cultural identity can also be provided at nursery school.

Children who grow up speaking several languages have more to learn than the single-language child. However, whereas children brought up in happy circumstances probably find the very fact of learning more than one language an extra intellectual stimulus, those raised in less satisfactory surroundings may be inhibited both linguistically and in their general development. If children are to be able to develop both in terms of language and as social beings, the people surrounding them must respresent security and understanding and be able to provide full emotional support whenever needed.

In fact, it is fairly difficult to say exactly what having a command of two or more languages actually implies – the most sensible definition of both single and multi-language speakers is probably that they have a more or less adequate command of the language(s) in question.

Although minority-group children attending pre-school need stimulating in the languages they are expected to acquire, this does not mean that they will be required to learn several languages at once at the same rate and to the same degree of proficiency. Minority-group children need pre-school staff who speak their language and share an understanding of their culture : all staff should be aware of and make allowances for the linguistic, social and cultural situation of these children.

A language is best learned by using several senses at once. This means that children will absorb a language best by taking part in various games and participating in a full range of everyday activities.

Children who are immigrants to Sweden do not have the same opportunities of picking up their mother tongue as children in their country of origin – instead, they should be provided with the opportunity of building up a double identity for themselves, e.g. Swedish-Finnish, Swedish-Greek, etc., while yet retaining the ability to communicate with monolingual persons who can speak and write only Swedish, Finnish, Greek, etc.

The findings of the Committee reveal an urgent need for further research on ways of stimulating the development of multilingual children in the home, at pre-school and in society in general.

NATIVE LANGUAGE BACKING AT PRE-SCHOOL LEVEL (CHAPTERS 4-6)

Retrospect

Activities aimed at helping children in their native language have been arranged at pre-school level since 1971, and in 1977 a special system of government grants was introduced for providing native language backing for six-year-olds at public pre-schools. Since 1979 grants have also been available for native language backing for five-year-olds.

A pilot scheme, initiated by the 1968 Government Committee on Day-care Centres and administered by the National Board of Health and Welfare, introducing native language backing at pre-school level was run on an experimental basis from 1971 to 1973. The first projects included in this scheme comprised training in Swedish, but it was soon realized that what the children really needed was assistance in their own language.

The first native language projects to be attempted emphasized the itinerant teacher. However, later tests revealed that it is important that native language backing be provided as an integral part of pre-school activities, and experimental native language groups, known as "single-language groups", produced fairly favourable results, especially with regard to children with dual linguistic and social backgrounds. Still, not enough tests have yet been been carried out to allow us to assess the value of native language backing in groups of varying make-up, with different sets of staff and using different training methods.

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Several trial schemes were also run in open pre-schools. These indicated that native language backing is often an excellent way of stimulating immigrant children in acquiring linguistic proficiency at the same time as their parents are encouraged to take an interest in their children, can obtain help when necessary and can become personally acquainted with the school and its work.

So far no tests or systematic inquiries have been carried out on the results of the native language backing provided in family day care. The Central Bureau of Statistics has no information on the extent to which children attending family day care are given assistance in their native language.

The Committee also studied the arrangements made at pre-school level for children from a few selected minority groups : Lappish children, Finnish-speaking children from the Swedish side of the border in the Tornedal region, and gypsy children – although for the Lapps the information obtained was mainly for children of school age. A special Lappish Education Authority was set up in 1980 to organize and supervise the schooling of Lappish children.

The need of the Finnish-speaking, Lappish and gypsy children for native language backing has now been noted, and today these groups are included in the native language reform.

The Immigration Board has followed gypsy affairs closely since 1976, and, with the National Board of Health and Welfare, took steps to encourage teachers working with gypsy families to include pre-school children in their activities; and, indeed, a survey carried out jointly by the Committee and the Immigration Board in 1981 showed that gypsy children today frequently attend pre-school and that most receive some form of native language backing. The majority speak Finnish and are members of Finnish-speaking groups, although native language assistance is sometimes also provided in Romany, the gypsies' own tongue.

The situation today

The general direction of the work expected of the pre-schools on behalf of minority-group children was indicated in the Government Bill (1975/76:118) on native language teaching at school and native language assistance at pre-school. The backing to be provided for children attending pre-school is to be an integral part of the normal activities of the school and shall strive towards developing a child's total personality, the aim being to lay the foundations of bilingualism and becoming a member of two different cultures.

The native language backing provided at pre-school today may, in principle, take any one of the following three forms : native-language groups (single-language groups), composite groups (bilingual groups), or Swedish-speaking groups (integrated groups).

Minority-group children attending family day care can be looked after by a daily child-minder with the same linguistic and cultural backgrounds as themselves. These children – at least after the age of five or six – also often receive native language assistance as members of the part-time groups run by pre-school.

The Committee reckons that 25%-30% of the under-sevens who are not native Swedish-speakers go to pre-school either in the form of a day nursery or a part-time group, as compared with a figure of 35% for all the children in Sweden.

At the beginning of 1981 the number of nursery school children with a native tongue other than Swedish was reckoned at 17,266, or some 7% of all the children then attending pre-school. In 20 of the 31 districts included in a survey carried out by the Committee, 9% of the total number of the children attending family day care were brought up speaking a language other than Swedish.

The number of children attending pre-school who are not native Swedish-speakers has increased by 4,500 since 1978. A large proportion of this increase can be ascribed to children under the age of five – although it should also be remembered that the general awareness of a child's need for native language backing and the criteria applied in judging such backing to be necessary may have altered since that date.

The proportion of children receiving native language backing has increased dramatically. During the period from 1977 to 1980 the percentage of non-native Swedish-speakers receiving native language backing jumped from about 32% to nearly 65%.

At the end of 1980, 45% of the non-native Swedish-speakers under the age of five were receiving native language backing in their pre-school, as compared with 76% of the five and six-year-olds.

The number of native language groups, the single-language groups, arranged by the pre-schools has increased from 30 or so in 1977 to 365 by the end of 1980.

The Central Bureau of Statistics has no details as to the number of children not brought up speaking Swedish who are members of a native language group. However, assuming an average group of twelve children, they must amount to some 4,400 children, i.e. almost 40% of the total number of children receiving native language assistance in the pre-schools.

Conclusion

On the whole, the results of the native language backing provided by the pre-schools are good. The interest shown by parents in their children's mother tongue and an awareness of its importance have increased during the last few years, while many local authorities have begun to display an interest in native language programmes in the pre-schools and have acquired experience of how to run them.

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However, many problems remain. For example, native language backing for only four hours per week is insufficient for many children; and assistance is often provided too late, perhaps not until the child has already reached the age of six.

Cooperation with the children's parents should be initiated on a wider scale, as should parent participation in nursery school activities.

In many districts the objectives and organization of native language backing schemes should be more closely defined and elaborated. Teachers and staff require more training and better support for their work in the form of clearly outlined programmes defining the approach, organization and methods to be adopted.

OBJECTIVES OF NATIVE LANGUAGE BACKING IN AND OUT OF PRE-SCHOOL (CHAPTER 7)

The objectives of Sweden's immigrant and minorities policy were laid down by Parliament in 1975 and were used as the basis for the 1976 Act on native language teaching at primary school level and native language assistance at pre-school level (Bill 1975/76:118).

The Committee considers that if immigrant and other minority children are to be expected to grow up speaking two languages and sharing two cultures without problems, they will need considerable support both at home and at pre-school. The early years are crucial, for it is then that the foundation is laid for a child's linguistic and personal identity.

Suggested objectives

In view of all this, the Committee recommends the following objectives for native language schemes in day nurseries, part-time groups and various complementary pre-school activities :

Minority groups should be afforded the possibility of retaining and developing their own languages and cultures within a Swedish context. Native language schemes should function as a complement to the home in helping a child to identify itself with the language and culture of its own family and group and should provide children with the chance of developing their own bilingual and bicultural identity as favourably as possible.

Target group, action

The children :

Children whose daily language in the home is not Swedish should be afforded the possibility of

a) receiving native language backing and assistance at pre-school and at other forms of child care amenity as a complement to the home; and of

b) receiving backing in this language as soon as they begin pre-school, whether they are attending a day nursery, family day care or are members of a part-time group.

The Committee also considers that

children belonging to linguistic minorities not attending pre-school should be afforded the possibility of receiving native language backing, both in open pre-school and in various cultural and recreational activities.

The parents :

The Committee considers

it important that through information and personal contact, minority-group parents be made aware of their role in the linguistic and cultural development of their children, and that they be supported in this role;

that parents and various official bodies, primarily the social services administration and children's welfare centres, should

cooperate in planning how best to meet a child's need for linguistic and cultural backing during its pre-school years; and

that minority-group and Swedish parents with children at pre-school and other child amenities, including open pre-school, should be afforded the opportunity of getting to know each other and learning from one another.

Staff :

Bilingual and Swedish staff at pre-school and other amenities should be better informed as to the objectives of native language assistance schemes. This applies equally to their work as a whole and to their individual duties.

The Committee considers that

pre-school staff play an important role as examples for the children. By their behaviour and approach they have a direct influence on the development of a child's personality and the attitude a child will take towards its own and other people's language and culture;

bilingual and Swedish staff should both adopt the same attitudes and approach, in formal terms and in practical work situations; and that

basic training, introduction and in-service training of bilingual and Swedish staff should emphasize cooperation and mutual cultural exchange.

INVESTIGATORY VISITS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES, PLANNING (CHAPTER 8)

Case finding activities and parental education

It is essential to form an estimate of a pre-school child's linguistic development and need for some form of linguistic backing at as early a stage as possible. Social services departments should therefore cooperate with maternity clinics and children's welfare centres in carrying out case finding activities among immigrant and minority-group children and their families.

Parliament has already adopted a resolution on the gradual introduction of parental education. Such training was to be introduced as from 1st January, 1980, and given around the time of the child's birth; but in their final report (SOU 1980:27) the Child Welfare Group recommended an expansion of parental education to include a period of the pre-school and school age years.

Investigatory visits to and the training of immigrant and minority-group parents should consider questions relating to the child's need for support and stimulation in its native tongue and culture. Children and parents of complicated social and linguistic backgrounds should also be able to receive guidance wherever necessary.

The Committee considers that parental education and other activities in which parents are involved should be emphasized primarily in districts in which large numbers of young families have recently arrived, both Swedes and immigrants, although other districts where the need for support and personal contact is known to be great should of course not be forgotten.

Language registration, planning

The possibilities of planning the extent to which native language backing should be provided and how it should be organized are severely limited by our lack of statistics on the language distribution of the population. The Committee on Immigrant Policies is at present looking into this question and has been asked to propose ways of registering individuals by the languages they speak.

The official notification of birth issued by the maternity ward at which a child is born states the language spoken by the child's mother and, occasionally, by its father. This information is then incorporated in the various records kept for the child by the child welfare services. Where appropriate the language spoken with the child at home is noted as well. Details are available from a survey carried out by the Committee

on 123 children's welfare centres in 22 districts with a high proportion of immigrants*.

The recording and registration system used by the children's welfare authorities was revised during 1981, and the Committee took the opportunity of notifying the National Board of Health and Welfare of how they considered the languages spoken by parents and children should be registered. At present the forms used contain a space to record the language spoken by both the mother and the father, but not the language used for communication with the child at home.

The Committee considers that municipalities would be wise to initiate long-term planning for native language backing schemes – these could be regarded as a complement to the municipal child care plan, although local authorities should not be charged with the same formal responsibility for planning native language backing as they are for the general child care plan.

The Committee recommends that the children's health centres be given the duty of collecting information on a child's linguistic background from the various records and case sheets used at the health centres and clinics. The children's health authorities, the social services and the schools should agree how such information – bearing in mind the need for secrecy – should be collected and passed on to the appropriate parties.

Since there is a need for a nationwide review of future requirements, e.g. for bilingual staff and bilingual training programmes, it would be desirable if the National Board of Health and Welfare could be kept abreast of the measures planned by local authorities for providing native language backing in child care amenities.

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* "Barnavårdscentralerna och språkliga minoritetsgrupper" (Children's Welfare Centres and Linguistic Minorities), Min. of Health and Social Affairs/Central Bureau of Statistics, March, 1981. Obtainable from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, S-103 33 Stockholm, Sweden.

Views and proposals of the Committee

The Committee considers that

local authorities should plan long-term and short-term native language backing schemes on the basis of information obtained from the children's health centres and other sources;

the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Board of Education, the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Association of Local Authorities should join with the Committee on Language and Cultural Heritage in reviewing how information on pre-school and other forms of native language backing programme are recorded statistically; and that

available resources for parental education should be primarily concentrated in districts in which large numbers of young families have recently moved in, both Swedes and immigrants.

The Committee proposes that

the children's health centres be charged with the duty of providing local authorities with an annual survey of the children belonging to various linguistic minorities who are in need of native language backing. This will then be used by the authorities in planning pre-schools and other forms of native language backing; and that

the National Board of Health and Welfare, in consultation with the Federation of County Councils and Association of Local Authorities, be instructed to indicate methods of language registration by the children's health centres and how this information can be passed on to and used by the local authorities.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (CHAPTER 9)

Under ss. 18 of the Social Services Act, children receiving treatment in hospital or some other institution are entitled to participate in activities corresponding to those that would normally be arranged at pre-school. This also applies to handicapped children being treated for their impairment and to those in children's or family homes (foster homes).

A report on handicapped children from immigrant groups in four districts of the county of Stockholm was recently published jointly by the National Council for Disabled Persons and the Swedish Immigration Board. Besides giving an account of the native language backing provided for children with impaired vision or hearing, or who are suffering from some mental or physical disablement, the report also describes the experience and views of parents and staff.

In all, 671 children between the ages of 0 and 16 were registered. Of these, 139 were immigrant children and 52 were receiving native language backing or training in some form.

The report indicated that both contact with the parents and treatment of the children involve a whole range of special difficulties. There is also a clear need for bilingual staff who would be able to help in the work with the children themselves and in contacts with their parents.

A study carried out in the county of Stockholm between 1978 and 1980 reveals that immigrant children are over-represented in children's homes – about 50% of all the children in the homes included in the study were immigrants, although a large number of them were in for relatively short periods.

Twenty-two local authorities supplied details of family homes for the Committee's survey of a number of selected districts. A total of 34

immigrant children had been placed in family homes in these districts; 11 were staying with family home parents speaking the same language as themselves, and 11 were receiving native language backing in pre-school.

A large number of Swedish hospitals are able to offer child patients some form of pre-school activity, often play therapy. The National Board of Health and Welfare keeps abreast of the activities available and informs the hospitals of the need children have of play therapy. The Board has no information as to whether children of pre-school age are able to receive native language backing at hospital.

Views and proposals of the Committee

The Committee considers that

> while they are admitted to a hospital or other institution, children of pre-school age belonging to linguistic minorities should be given access to pre-school activities in their own language. Staff with a command of the language spoken by the child or its family, or else an intermediary from the same linguistic minority, represent an important asset.

The Committee proposes that

> the National Board of Health and Welfare be assigned the task of studying and documenting the way children of pre-school age belonging to linguistic minorities are looked after in hospitals and other institutions. Part of the Board's duties should be to initiate and document research on the treatment of these children and to encourage development in this area.

MEASURES AT PRE-SCHOOL (CHAPTER 10)

The native language backing provided in a pre-school should be an integral part of its normal range of activities. Hence, children should be able to use their native language in any activity arranged at pre-school or in family day care; and some aspects of such activities should already be familiar to the child from its own culture.

It is particularly important to remember that an introductory period will be necessary for children and parents belonging to linguistic minorities. Parent participation should be planned so that the children's parents have a real chance of being able to take part in the work of the pre-school and of having a say in the direction this should take.

Organization

The Committee wishes to emphasize that children normally receive the most satisfactory form of native language backing in groups comprising bilingual staff as part of the regular team.

Local authorities should therefore avoid placing a child in a pre-school group or family day care in which no-one on the staff can speak its native language. If, in spite of repeated efforts, this should prove impossible, steps should be taken to compensate. This applies during both the introductory period and after. Examples of the type of measure that might be taken are increased parent participation in the work of the school and native language training by a speciali teacher a few hours per week.

Local authorities should seek the advice of parents and immigrant organizations in bringing together children with the same linguistic and cultural background in the same groups and family day nurseries, even though this may mean that some of the children will not be able to attend a pre-school in the immediate vicinity of where they live.

Children badly needing assistance in their native language must be placed in a native language group – the children participating in these groups need to be gradually acquainted with the Swedish language and culture.

Composite groups have the advantage of allowing children who are not native Swedish-speakers to keep continuously in touch with both their native tongue and Swedish. In these groups it is important to try to strike a balance between the two languages and cultures.

For children who are already receiving considerable backing in their family language and culture from their own homes, native language backing in a Swedish-speaking group may prove to be adequate as an extra stimulant and support.

Some children fare better in family day care in which the child-minder speaks the children's native language and shares the same cultural background, rather than in a totally Swedish-speaking day nursery group.

In family day care, too, care should be taken in the linguistic and cultural composition of a group. In addition, it is often highly desirable to be able to combine the activities of family day care with those of a day-care centre or part-time group. Participation in the activities of an open pre-school would also be acceptable.

Supervisory authorities

The district authorities are those with the most direct responsibility for seeing to it that nursery school activities, including native language backing, function satisfactorily. The county administrations are responsible for pre-schools on a regional level, while the overall national responsibility is borne by the National Board of Health and Welfare. It is also the duty of the Board to keep abreast of the social services available throughout the country and to encourage developments in individual areas.

The need for native language backing among Lappish children, the Finnish-speaking children in the Norrbotten region, and gypsy children should be particularly noted by district and regional authorities, as well as by the National Board of Health and Welfare.

There are also obvious advantages to be gained by allocating the duty of supervising and developing native language backing for Lappish children to the Lappish Education Authority.

It is therefore desirable that the Authority employ the services of pre-school teachers who are experts in Lappish and the Lappish culture – a pilot scheme could be run for an initial period of three years.

The Committee proposes that

> the Lappish Education Authority be allocated funds for a pilot scheme, to be run for an initial period of three years, for the purpose of organizing native language backing for Lappish children in pre-school. The Committee reckons that Skr 250,000 would be needed annually for a scheme of this nature.

MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL WORKING METHODS AT PRE-SCHOOL LEVEL (CHAPTER 11)

Pre-school activities for children belonging to various linguistic minorities should be organized on the basis of

a) the approach and working methods of Swedish-speaking pre-schools; and

b) the children's need for backing in their own language and culture.

This means that mealtimes, rests, "assembly", playtime activities both in and out of doors, study visits, excursions, etc., must all be adapted to the children's varying cultural patterns and need for native language backing.

Cooperation with parents and an awareness of the children's special needs and development are therefore important factors in the work of the staff.

Attention should also be paid to the parent's views on child-raising, as well as to the rules, activities and general approach to life met with in the children's homes.

In addition, parents should themselves be informed of the pre-school and its work – its goals, the methods it uses, its rules and routines. If the parents themselves can actively participate, so much the better, for not only will they then be able to contribute to and influence the work of the school but it will become easier to define and realize their wishes and thereby gain an insight into their different ways of thinking and behaving.

The duty of bilingual staff is to help children develop and to provide them with linguistic and cultural backing. In addition, bilingual staff are expected to serve as a link between two cultures, both for children belonging to their own linguistic group and for Swedish-speakers; and since they play an important role as intermediaries in the work of parents and school, they are also expected to help Swedish-speaking staff in their dealings with minority-group parents.

Swedish staff have equivalent duties for the Swedish language and Swedish culture, it being understood that they will be able to familiarize themselves with, comprehend and appreciate non-Swedish cultures as well. In Swedish-speaking groups in which there are children receiving native language backing for only a few hours per week, Swedish staff are expected to provide active support for the children's cultural identity.

Swedish staff thus fill two important functions in providing native language backing for minority-group children – not only are they required to play an active role in understanding and boosting the family's cultural identity, but they are expected to provide assistance in the Swedish language and explain Swedish culture and society and its relationship to the minority culture.

Views

The Committee considers that

the National Board of Health and Welfare should draw up a table of complementary methods to be incorporated in their series of guidelines, the Work Plan for Pre-Schools. These should describe the practical approach to various linguistic groups attending pre-school and summarize the most important aspects of attempts to provide native language backing for linguistic minorities. The National Board of Health and Welfare should also join with the Board of Education and similar authorities in drawing up a new working plan for pre-school activities incorporating the basic principles of linguistic and cultural backing for children belonging to linguistic minority groups.

COOPERATION BETWEEN PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL (CHAPTER 12)

Primary school, besides teaching a child its native language, also provides study guidance in that language and tuition in Swedish as a foreign language. As at pre-school, the objective is to give pupils the chance of growing up speaking two languages and of being members of two different cultures.

The purpose of study guidance is both to provide extra backing for the child in certain subjects and to act as an additional stimulus to the development of its native language.

Tuition in Swedish as a foreign language aims at giving the student sufficient knowledge of Swedish to allow him to hold his own among friends, at work and in society at large on the same terms as his Swedish colleagues.

Children not brought up speaking Swedish can receive native language tuition, study guidance, and tuition in Swedish as a foreign language in a native language class, composite class or Swedish-speaking class. There are also special preparatory classes for children who find it difficult to keep up with a Swedish-speaking class. Preparatory classes are temporary only – the pupils belong to an "ordinary" class as well to which they will be gradually transferred.

Government subsidies are paid towards native language tuition and the teaching of Swedish as a foreign language. Subsidies are also available for special tuition for gypsy children.

Local authorities are also expected to provide native language tuition and study guidance for students whose native language is not Swedish at upper secondary school level. Government grants are also available to this end.

A study carried out by the Board of Education in 1980 revealed that 8 of the 31 districts included in the study had arranged their own local programmes for native language tuition at pre-school and primary school levels. Districts with particularly many immigrants commonly ran permanent advisory committees, while in others some native language teachers were working at both pre-school and primary school level. However, cooperation between pre-schools and primary school has hitherto mostly dealt with organizational problems and only rarely considered the actual work and methods of the schools.

Views and proposals of the Committee

The Committee considers that increased cooperation between pre-school and primary school will be necessary in order to provide continuity in native language programmes for non-Swedish speakers. Better cooperation between staff is therefore essential. This can be brought about through improved, coordinated information, joint in-service training, and more opportunities for staff at both levels to plan and discuss the objectives, contents and methods of native language backing programmes.

Two other committees, the Committee on Cooperation between Pre-School and Primary School and the Committee on Language and Cultural Heritage, are expected to submit proposals for achieving better continuity between pre-school and primary school children who are not native Swedish-speakers.

The Committee considers that

local cooperation between pre-schools and primary schools should be based on joint objectives and planning;

pre-schools and primary schools should cooperate in planning native language backing programmes;

pre-schools and primary schools should prepare parents and children better than at present for the child's coming attendance at school and the native language backing he or she will be receiving;

in certain cases it should be possible to arrange joint native language backing/tuition for older pre-school children and the younger primary school pupils. The National Board of Health and Welfare and Board of Education should initiate and evaluate test schemes for such coordination of native language backing and native language tuition; and that

in the future the Board of Education and the National Board of Health and Welfare should pay particular attention to the problem of continuity between native language backing programmes at pre-school and primary school level.

The Committee proposes

that children of school age whose schooling has been deferred should be entitled to the same native language backing as other pre-school children, or, if needs be, even more. As a rule, the pre-schools should be responsible for providing such backing (see also chapters 16 and 17).

SPECIAL MEASURES OUTSIDE PRE-SCHOOL – CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES (CHAPTER 13)

Not all children go to pre-school – and in many cases it is precisely those children who need pre-school backing in their native language most who receive no assistance at all. Social and group activities outside pre-school therefore play a vital role in stimulating and engaging the interest of children from minority groups. Books, radio and television are also of considerable importance, particularly for children not participating in a pre-school native language scheme.

The special children's prgrammes arranged by libraries and immigrant and minority organizations have been fairly widespread hitherto, and of some importance, although there is no doubt that they could reach more children, particularly of pre-school age, and develop both the methods they use and the range of activities they offer. Other areas of the cultural and recreational sector should also be encouraged to provide linguistic and cultural stimuli for children from different linguistic groups. However, libraries and associations are dependent on there being a supply of easily available books, illustrations, recorded material, etc.

A decisive factor in this area is how government and local subsidies are paid out and the purposes for which they are intended. The Committee has found that a greater proportion of existing subsidies could be earmarked for pre-school programmes among minority-group children, always provided that the subsidies themselves are so constituted as to be able to give more direct support to activities of this nature – the system of grants as it is today is extremely unclear. There is also the danger that grants might be allowed to govern the activities of some association, for example, in a manner not fully in line with the children's needs. What is more, in order to be able to make the best use of them, a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of the grants available and how to apply for them is an absolute necessity.

A further important consideration is to try to involve adults from the various minority groups in the activities arranged for the children –

here we almost certainly have large resources which have hitherto hardly been tapped at all. However, this means that children's and young people's supervisors will have to be offered better working conditions, staff will have to be actively recruited, and training courses will have to be improved.

Views and proposals of the Committee

The Committee considers children who have not received pre-school backing in their native language by the age of six or before they start school to be in particular need of extra native language backing. Indeed, if they are to be bilingual and bi-cultural, this may be essential.

The Committee considers that

the National Council for Cultural Affairs should draw up a special programme for children and young people belonging to immigrant and minority groups;

immigrant associations, libraries, museums, etc., should gather documentary material and publish information on the culture of the various immigrant and minority groups, and their situation in Sweden and the district where they live;

immigrant organizations, etc., should be provided with information outlining schemes for backing children in their native language and culture and should be given details of grants and how to apply for them; and that

Swedish and immigrant organizations should be able to cooperate in training children's and young people's supervisors. For example, a Swedish educational association might join with one of the immigrant associations in planning children's playtime activities.

The Committee proposes that

the National Council for Cultural Affairs and the National Youth Council, in collaboration with the various authorities and orga-

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nizations concerned, be assigned the task of reviewing the grants and subsidies currently available for cultural and recreational activities. Their work should lead to recommendations for measures aimed at providing backing for the native language schemes arranged by associations and other bodies for minority children of pre-school age;

the cultural offerings of public institutions, radio and television for immigrant and minoritygroup children be increased. This will provide them with wider backing for their own language and culture; and that

training courses for young people's supervisors for various minority groups be organized as soon as possible within the framework of those already run by the folk high schools for recreational and youth leaders. These courses should pay particular attention to working with children of pre-school age.

TOYS AND WORKING MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITIES INVOLVING CHILDREN OF PRE-SCHOOL AGE (CHAPTER 14)

There is a bad lack of toys and working materials for immigrant and minority-group children in Sweden, especially for the smaller linguistic groups and minorities from distant countries. There is also a scarcity of material depicting the life lived by linguistic minorities in Sweden and too few translations of Swedish children's literature.

The information on the material available in various minority languages needs improving. At present it is difficult for pre-school and primary school staff or heads of children's programmes to find out exactly what material is available and how it can be obtained.

Among the duties of the National Institute for Information on Educational Aids (SIL) is to provide information on the educational aids available at elementary and upper school levels, and this includes aids for the schooling of immigrants. Although the information available from the National Board of Health and Welfare and Children's Environment Council fills a more or less similar need at pre-school level, it is far from sufficient.

In 1981 a government committee recommended the establishment of a national centre for educational aids for native language programmes for children of primary and pre-school age, and in December, 1981, Parliament decided that SIL was to cease its activities by July, 1983. The responsibility for providing information on educational aids, including immigrant-oriented material for use in elementary and upper secondary schools, was to fall on the Board of Education. Questions relating to the availability of educational aids for the instruction of immigrants are currently being handled by the Committee on Language and Cultural Heritage, whereas the problem of providing information on the materials available for native language programmes at pre-school level still remains unsolved.

Views and proposals of the Committee

The Committee considers it important to increase the import and production of toys and working materials for minority-group children. The material available should be reviewed and described, and information should be published on how it can be purchased or borrowed.

The Committee considers that

experts from the various linguistic groups should cooperate with library staff in drawing up specifications or lists of the material available, indicating how useful it would be for any particular group;

that these lists could be used as a source of information for parents, pre-school staff and other persons working with children; and that

the National Council for Cultural Affairs should formulate a set of recommendations pertaining to children's literature in the various minority languages.

The Committee proposes that

the National Board of Health and Welfare, in collaboration with the organizations involved, be assigned the task of investigating and

recommending ways of organizing and developing the production and distribution of material relating to native language programmes and of suggesting how to provide information on what is currently available.

SPECIAL MEASURES FOR TRAINING OF STAFF (CHAPTER 15)

At the beginning of 1981, some 2,000 persons were employed as bilingual pre-school staff, approximately 1,100 being regular members of a children's group and about 700 being itinerant teachers. The remaining 200 or so were kitchen staff, cleaners, etc.

Although all bilingual staff play an important role in the native language programme of a children's group, this chapter, and others in the report, refers primarily to bilingual staff whose function in the group is mainly educational.

Bilingual pre-school and native language teachers have been trained since 1977, and a proposal to train bilingual child nurses for work in the various programmes arranged for children and young people has now been put forward by the Board of Education as well. This is currently under review by the Government.

Among the instructions issued to the Committee was to look into ways of ensuring that bilingual staff will always be on hand. Today it happens far too often that the places available for the training of bilingual pre-school staff are insufficiently filled. There are a number of reasons for this, including the way the rules for admission to the courses are formulated, where the courses are held, the way they are organized and what they comprise. A further cause is probably to be sought in that there is less chance today than previously of being able to get a job in one of the child care amenities. Other reasons are local staff policies and the official requirements placed by authorities on employees in the child care sector. These are all factors which are likely to be of major importance to bilingual persons applying for training.

The Committee considers that courses for future bilingual pre-school staff should concentrate on training bilingual pre-school teachers and child nurses.

The Committee also considers it advisable to go on providing the type of training leading to dual competence, i.e. staff qualified for work with both Swedish-speaking children and those brought up speaking another language. However, the courses offered should be better adapted to the previous knowledge and abilities of the students, which may vary considerably.

A large proportion of the bilingual staff already employed at pre-school has never received even the most basic teacher training, and many have never actually been trained as bilingual staff. It is therefore highly desirable that local governments and educational authorities look into ways of providing training for these people.

The Committee considers that Swedish staff, too, require training leading to dual competence, for an understanding of the children's cultural and domestic situation is important to them in their work.

All staff working with children not brought up as Swedish-speakers should therefore receive further training.

Although the Committee was not directed to consider the training of non-pre-school staff, we would like to emphasize that there is an urgent need for bilingual staff in the social services, at maternity clinics and children's health centres, and in cultural and recreational organizations. In addition, Swedish-speaking staff continually coming into contact with children and parents from linguistic minorities should be better informed about their background.

Views and proposals of the Committee

Recruitment of Staff :

The Committee considers that

emphasis should be placed on the recruitment and training of bilingual pre-school teachers and child nurses;

training of native language teachers should concentrate more on work at pre-school and primary schcol level;

it is important that local authorities review their need for bilingual staff in various linguistic groups and plan their staff organization accordingly;

the National Board of Health and Welfare should form an estimate of the need for bilingual staff on a national level;

the educational and labour market authorities should join forces in arranging experimental introductory courses paving the way for immigrants to train as pre-school teachers and child nurses;

local adult education should be adapted to the need of immigrants to complete their basic education so as to become eligible for training as pre-school or native language teachers;

colleges and universities should look into the possibilities of providing "open university"-type training for bilingual staff. This would mean that training could to a large extent be carried out in the home;

colleges and universities should, wherever necessary, offer bilingual tuition as part of their regular courses, even for relatively small linguistic minorities;

for certain linguistic minorities, the Office of Swedish Higher Education (UHÄ) should attempt to institute cooperation between the Nordic countries; and that

training leading to double competence for bilingual staff should be continued. A thorough review should be made of how the courses offered can best be adapted to their objectives.

In-service training :

The Committee considers that

it is important that in-service training of persons working in the child care amenities be continued. Such training should attempt to define the goals of native language schemes and to describe their methods and the work involved in concrete terms;

special attention should be paid to the need of senior teachers and administrative staff for further training in matters pertaining to immigrants and minorities;

local authorities should collaborate with schools and universities in drawing up "individual" courses providing bilingual and Swedish staff with extra backing in their work with the native language programmes; and that

the National Board of Health and Welfare should continue to provide support, e.g. for in-service training organized in collaboration with the immigrants' countries of origin. Some such courses could probably be coordinated with corresponding training for school staff organized at university level.

Non-pre-school staff :

The Committee considers that

it is very important to train and recruit bilingual staff in other sectors of the social services, including maternity clinics and child health centres, the medical services, institutions, etc., which normally come into contact with immigrant and minority-group children; and that

both basic and in-service training of Swedish staff in the areas suggested b the Committee should place much greater emphasis on the circumstances and needs of linguistic minorities in Sweden.

Objectives and contents of training courses for pre-school staff :

The Committee proposes that

the Board of Education and UHÄ be assigned the task of suggesting basic training for bilingual staff already working in the pre-schools;

that UHÄ and the Board of Education, in collaboration with the National Board of Health and Welfare and other bodies, be assigned the task of reviewing the courses available to future pre-school staff in the light of the Committee's views on the general direction that such training should take; and that

their review also include the training of Swedish staff, bearing in mind the special demands of work among children who are not native Swedish-speakers and who have non-Swedish cultural backgrounds.

PROPOSED ACT ON NATIVE LANGUAGE BACKING IN PRE-SCHOOLS (CHAPTER 16)

The enactment in Parliament in 1976 on native language training and teaching did not make it the duty of local authorities to provide native language backing at pre-school level – on the other hand, at primary school level, local authorities are obliged to provide tuition in a child's own language.

However, the Government suggested (Bill 1975/76:118) that local authorities might also be made liable to provide native language backing for non-Swedish six-year-olds at pre-school as well, and indeed, the National Board of Health and Welfare and other bodies sent out much information on the assumption that the decisions made by the Government on the basis of this Bill were binding in that direction.

The Committee's instructions included directives to clarify immigrant children's right to native language backing and to recommend any changes that might better fulfil their particular needs. The Committee was also asked to consider the matter of when native language backing should first be offered to a child.

In June, 1980, the Committee submitted a memorandum to the Government recommending that local authorities be legally required to provide native language backing for five and six-year-olds whose native language is not Swedish. However, although the memorandum has been approved by the appropriate bodies, a government decision has yet to be made.

~~The present chapter contains proposals for a new Act based on the work of the Committee after the submission of their~~ previous recommendation.

In the view of the Committee, children whose language in the home is not Swedish should be provided with native language backing as soon as they start attending family day care or pre-school.

An important reason for passing this into law is that these children should be actually guaranteed a right to native language backing. It is true that without legislation local authorities would have greater freedom in directing government subsidies and other resources to the areas where, in their opinion, the greatest needs lie, but in reality decisions of this nature are extremely difficult to make.

Once again, the Committee would like to stress that native language backing at pre-school level should be provided for children whose day-to-day language in the home is not Swedish.

The Committee therefore recommends that the obligation of local authorities to provide native language backing for immigrant children be enacted as an amendment (17a) to the Social Services Act.

Although in previous chapters a number of improvements were suggested which could be made without extra resources, the Committee finds it

impossible to satisfy both the original and the supplementary government directives in proposing new legislation. The original directives instructed the Committee to look into ways of improving native language backing programmes, while under the supplementary directives no proposals were to be made by any committee that would require extra economic resources.

The Committee has therefore chosen to submit two alternative proposals.

The first calls for local authorities to be made legally responsible for providing native language backing for children not brought up as Swedish-speakers throughout the period they attend pre-school or family day care. This proposal is best in line with the Committee's main directives and with the children's need for continuous linguistic backing.

The second, taking the supplementary directives as its starting point, would require local authorities to be responsible for providing native language backing for pre-school children not brought up as Swedish-speakers for at least two years.

Under the second proposal – based on the supplementary directives – a child would risk a sudden cessation of native language backing after two years at pre-school, which is clearly undesirable. However, this need not happen if the child is attending a pre-school employing bilingual staff on a regular basis or is in family day care where the daily child-minder speaks the same language as the child.

Both alternatives call for native language backing to be provided for at least four hours per week for a minimum of 35 weeks per year.

In the case of adoptive children and those requiring more assistance in their native language than required by the new law, the Committee considers that help could be provided under the terms of the Assistance Act (ss. 6 of the Social Services Act).

The assumption is made in the proposed legislation that, disregarding Swedish, native language backing will be given in one language only,

although exceptions may occasionally be justifiable. For instance, native language backing in both Finnish and Romany may be considered necessary for the children of Finnish gypsies.

Under ss. 18 of the Social Services Act, children receiving treatment in hospital or some other institution are entitled to participate in activities corresponding to those that would normally be arranged in pre-school. Should the Committee's proposals be passed into law, such children who are not native Swedish-speakers would be entitled to native language backing under the same set of rules as when they were not in hospital or an institution.

The proposed legislation set forth below provides for local authorities to be able to apply for exemption from their obligation to draw up a native language programme. However, the Committee wishes to emphasize that exemption should be granted only very seldom and where there are exceptional grounds for so doing.

In the opinion of the Committee, children over the age of three or so often need native language backing in a group of children who speak the same language as themselves. If the child is not attending pre-school, this can be arranged by letting him or her join one of the native language programmes run by the open pre-schools – which will become eligible for government subsidies on 1st January, 1983. It is important to encourage immigrant and minority organizations to participate in schemes of this nature.

Proposed legislation

Proposal based on the original government directives and conclusions of the Committee :

Present clause : -----

Proposed clause :

ss. 17a

The Social Welfare Committee shall provide native language backing for children speaking a language other than Swedish as their daily means of communication in the home.

Native language backing shall be available to every child for at least 4 hours per week for a minimum of 35 weeks per year. The children envisaged in ss. 14(2) of this Act shall be offered native language backing.

Should there be exceptional grounds for so doing, the County Administration may grant the Social Welfare Committee temporary exemption from the obligation to provide native language backing.

Proposal based on the supplementary directives :

Present clause : -----

Proposed clause :

The Social Welfare Committee shall provide native language backing for children speaking a language other than Swedish as their daily means of communication in the home.

Native language backing shall be available to every child for at least 4 hours per week for a minimum of 35 weeks per year. The children envisaged in ss. 14(2) of this Act shall be offered native language backing.

Children beginning pre-school at the age of six shall be offered native language backing for at least 4 hours per week for a minimum of 35 weeks per year.

Should there be exceptional grounds for so doing, the County Administration may grant the Social Welfare Committee temporary exemption from the obligation to provide native language backing.

The Committee also recommends the inclusion of a clause allowing appeal against a decision of the Social Welfare Committee. This would entail an amendment to ss. 74 of the Social Services Act.

The proposed amendment would run as follows :

Present and proposed clause :

ss. 74

Appeal against a decision of the County Administration in matters concerning permits under ss. 69 of this Act or enjoinders under ss. 70 of this Act shall be lodged with the Administrative Court of Appeal.

Decisions of the County Administration in the matter of an enjoinder under ss. 70 of this Act, and equivalent decisions of the Administrative Court of Appeal, shall apply immediately.

Proposed clause :

Appeal against a decision of the County Administration in the matter of native language backing under ss. 17a(3) of this Act shall be lodged with the Administrative Court of Appeal.

ESTIMATED COST, FINANCING, GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES (CHAPTER 17)

The Committee finds that itinerant teachers respresent a particularly heavy cost for local authorities. At present about 36% of the children receiving native language backing are visited by itinerant bilingual teachers, while the remaining 64% are helped by permanent staff in a native language or composite group. The average cost of providing native language backing through visiting or permanent staff is estimated to be Skr 5,000 per child.

The Committee also finds that in most cases the local authorities have attempted to establish either native language or composite groups.

With the system of government grants as it is now, some districts are faced with heavy costs for providing native language programmes, while in others the programmes more or less pay for themselves.

A new system of government grants for child care amenities is to be introduced on 1st January, 1983. Under this, subsidies will be payable in an amount equivalent to 40% of the cost of running day nurseries, part-time groups, free-time centres, family day care and open pre-school, and, in some cases, the cost of the educational supervision of the child care amenities.

The Committee recommends the introduction of a new system of government grants for the provision of native language backing for pre-school children.

The Committee recommends that subsidies be payable for native language backing programmes in an amount of 40% of the gross costs faced by the local authorities for providing such programmes – these may represent wages for staff, capital services costs, costs for premises, fixtures and fittings, food, play equipment, excursions, or any other sum directly attributable to running the programme. The Committee also suggests that local authorities be provided with an extra incentive through the inclusion in the basic subsidy of Skr 1,000 per child receiving native language backing.

In chapter 16 the Committee submits two alternative proposals for legislation guaranteeing that children not brought up speaking Swedish in the home will be able to receive native language backing at pre-school.

Under the first proposal, children who are not native Swedish-speakers would receive native language backing for the whole time they attended

pre-school or family day care. The gross cost of this alternative would be, as estimated by the Committee, some 74 million kronor per year, 37 million of which would be covered by government grants.

The second proposal is based on the supplementary directives issued to all government committees, under which it was to be possible to finance any proposal or recommendation within the framework of existing subsidies. In 1980 the subsidies allotted to native language training amounted to 22 million kronor. The sum set aside in this year's budget is 29 million kronor.

The second proposal therefore requires local authorities to be made responsible for providing children not brought up speaking Swedish in the home with native language backing at pre-school for at least two years. If subsidies are paid for at least two years, plus the remainder of the time a child might receive native language backing at pre-school, the gross cost of providing such services would probably be between 46 and 69 million kronor per year, with government subsidies amounting to between 23 and 34 million kronor per year.

The Committee also considered the possibility of extending the government subsidies paid to the schools to cover the programmes run by the pre-schools as well, and whether the two forms of grant could be regarded as a single resource. However, the Committee felt that this would involve examination of schemes lying outside its terms of reference – although it should, on the other hand, still be possible for local authorities to survey their resources and give priority to those areas with the greatest need. These questions should also be looked into by the Committee on Language and Cultural Heritage, the Committee on Collaboration between Pre-School and Primary School, etc.

The Committee proposes that

> a system of government grants be introduced whereby the local authorities can include 40% of the cost of providing native language backing in their figures for calculating the size of the subsidy

payable for child care amenities. These figures should also include a sum of Skr 1,000 per child receiving native language backing; and that

such subsidy be payable for the whole time a child is receiving native language backing at pre-school.

Suggested research and pilot schemes

In several chapters of this report the Committee has already pointed to areas which would repay research and continued development.

In chapter 2 the Committee describes some of the factors influencing the conditions under which immigrant and minority-group children grow up. Here there is a need for further research on factors affecting these children's development. Behavioural research in Sweden has hitherto failed to provide a satisfactory analysis of the conditions under which immigrant children and young people grow up.

The chapter also points to the need for research on children remaining in their native country when their parents emigrate, or who are sent back to their country of origin at, for instance, the start of the school term. Another question that needs looking into is what happens to children who return with their families to their own country after having spent several years abroad. The Government should attempt to institute cooperation with the emigrant countries and the appropriate international bodies in bringing about such research.

Chapters 3, 10 and 11 call attention to the need to document and assess the progress of native language backing programmes in pre-schools.

The effects of various measures need evaluating with a greater degree of accuracy than is possible at present. So far we have no estimate of how well different types of native language programme function.

More research should be done on how children learn several languages at once. Work is needed to research and develop the content and methods of

pre-school programmes aimed at providing cultural and linguistic backing for immigrant and minority-group children.

Language research should consider "the human aspect" far more widely in the future than hitherto. Environmental and psychological factors have proved to play a crucial role in the way a person develops his linguistic capacity, particularly in children who are expected to learn two or more languages at once.

In chapter 8 the Committee recommends that projects providing experimental training for immigrant and minority-group parents should be given continued high priority.

In chapter 9 the Committee emphasizes the desirability of hospitals and other institutions (children's homes, family homes and institutions for handicapped children) testing various forms of native language backing.

In chapter 10 the Committee recommends that the Lappish Education Authority be allocated funds for a pilot scheme providing native language backing for Lappish children attending pre-school. Under this proposal, Skr 250,000 per year would be set aside for the scheme, which would run for an initial period of three years.

Chapter 12 takes up the need for cooperation on a trial basis between primary schools and pre-schools. The Committee recommends among other things that an attempt be made to organize joint native language backing for the older pre-school children and the younger primary school pupils, the aim being to assemble sufficiently large groups and to make the best use of the bilingual staff available.

High priority is given to research and development in various areas of the child care services in "On Research, etc.", a recently submitted bill (1981/82:106) dealing with government research policy which also emphasizes the importance of research on migration and ethnic identity. The Committee considers it extremely important to continue researching and developing the native language backing programmes, for only by this means will we be able to build up a fund of knowledge and experience for their future expansion and improvement.

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